

VZCZCXRO3825
RR RUEHQU
DE RUEHPU #0339 0891201
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 301201Z MAR 09
FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9785
INFO RUEHZH/HAITI COLLECTIVE
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 2264
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 0344
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 2005
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SUBJECT: 20TH POLICE PROMOTION GRADUATES WITH MIXED MESSAGE

¶1. (U) This message is sensitive but unclassified - please protect accordingly.

¶2. (U) SUMMARY: On February 27, the Haitian National Police (HNP) graduated its 20th Promotion of 702 police officers, including 86 women. While speeches by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice focused on recent improvements in the country, HNP Director General Andresol spoke very critically of the country's situation and its lack of rule of law. END SUMMARY.

¶3. (U) Following seven months of training, 702 new police officers graduated on February 27 from the National Police Academy. In addition to guests of the new graduates, attending were Prime Minister Pierre-Louis (PM), Minister of Justice Exume (MoJ), Director General of the HNP Andresol (DG), and representatives from the diplomatic corps and the United Nations Stabilization Force (MINUSTAH).

¶4. (U) Speeches made by PM Pierre-Louis, DG Andresol, MoJ Exume and Academy Director Maxime noted the community policing and human rights components of the training, as well as the increasing participation of women. All indicated that the police should find new ways of engaging with the community. The 20th promotion graduated 86 women out of the 702 in total, while the 21st promotion of 460 currently in training includes 127 women. In addition, a special office dealing with the recruitment of women has been created within the HNP. The addition of these officers brings the strength of the HNP to approximately 9,500, still far short of the goal agreed with MINUSTAH of 14,000 by 2011. Recent expansion of Academy facilities by the U.S. and Canada now allows for two promotions to be trained simultaneously, offering hope that the HNP will be able to reach its goal by the end of 2011 and make up for the failure to graduate any cadets in 2008.

¶5. (SBU) All speeches noted the commitment required of the new officers entering the line of duty. The Academy Director singled out the USG to thank for its extensive support of each group of cadets. However, while the other speakers spoke of recent improvements in the country's security situation, DG Andresol's remarks came across as very critical of the culture of impunity, of corruption, and the absence of rule of law in Haiti. His words, painting a gloomy picture, were a strong warning to the new graduates of the difficulties they would encounter. These remarks, whether driven by personal frustration or by a genuine assessment of the path ahead, stood in stark contrast to the cheery mood of the ceremony.

¶6. (SBU) COMMENT: The HNP's increase in manpower is welcome, especially given the USG's investments in the training and

deployment of police officers. Nevertheless, despite significant improvements in Haiti's overall security situation during the past three years, Andresol's remarks serve as a reminder that much work remains for improving both policing and the judicial system, especially in the historically dangerous neighborhoods of Port-au-Prince. Notwithstanding the dramatic improvements in the once notorious Cite Soleil slum, where 100 of the new police graduates are to be assigned, GOH nervousness over the threat of potentially violent protests there was sufficient to briefly postpone the inauguration of the USG-funded Police Commissariat and the deployment of the graduates. The inauguration is now scheduled for March 25.

SANDERSON